Alternative teaching strategies

Education, Teaching

From Infancy until the late stages of our lives, we undergo different stages of development. In each of the stages, we are supposed to be mastering some craft, or prioritizing a task that we have not given the time of day before. Several psychologists have come up with theories about these stages, each intertwined with the other. This paper will concentrate on Jean Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development, specifically, to Concrete Operational Stage, in relation to the experience of tutoring Math to the children in St. Kitts. According to Perret-Clermont and Bessire, (2004) from encyclopedia. com, " Piaget compared ideas and facts, thephilosophyofscienceand theobservationof children, working out the fundamental principles of genetic epistemology. " Concrete Operational Stage happens from the ages 7 to 11 years. According to Piaget, at this stage, reversibility, that is objects when changed has the ability to return to their original state, is attained. According to Marshall (1998) in encyclopedia. com, " In the stage of so-called concrete-operations (which lasts from about the ages of 7 to 11 or 12), children start to classify objects, can take the role of others and understand the nature of cause and effect, but still have difficulty thinking about abstract concepts without referring these to real events or particular images with which they are familiar. " Edwards, Hopgood, Rosenberg and Rush (2009) further wrote in their website, " During this stage, the thought process becomes more rational, mature and 'adult like', or more 'operational', although this process most often continues well into the teenage years.

The process is divided by Piaget into two stages, the Concrete Operations, and the Formal Operations stage, which is normally undergone by adolescents. In the Concrete Operational stage, the child has the ability to

develop logical thought about an object, if they are able to manipulate it. By comparison, however, in the Formal Operations stage, the thoughts are able to be manipulated and the presence of the object is not necessary for the thought to take place. ”

Other characteristic for this stage was mentioned by Atherton (2009) in the Learning Teaching website: “ Can think logically about objects and events; Achieves conservation of number (age 6), mass (age 7), and weight (age 9); Classifies objects according to several features and can order them in series along a single dimension such as size. ” An Anonymous writer fromChild Developmentinstitute (2008) said the following for this stage of development, “ Evidence for organized, logical thought. There is the ability to perform multiple classification tasks, order objects in a logical sequence, and comprehend the principle of conservation.

Thinking becomes less transductive and less egocentric. The child is capable of concrete problem-solving. Some reversibility now possible (quantities moved can be restored such as in arithmetic: 3+4 = 7 and 7-4 = 3, etc.) Class logic-finding bases to sort unlike objects into logical groups where previously it was on superficial perceived attribute such as color. Categorical labels such as " number" or animal" now available. ” It is from these that the project was initiated. For two months, the author of this paper has spent time with the school kids of St. Kitts.

Every day, tutorial lessons were held to aid children in accomplishing their tasks at school. A set of survey questions was also distributed to find out their views to help in setting up the project. The survey consisted of 10 questions specifically phrased and distributed to both the children and their

parents. Of the ten questions answered by the children, the top four questions that were noticeable were questions number 2, 4, 5 and 9. Question number two asked them if their parents spend quality time with them and their schoolwork. Nearly 70% of the population said “ no” Majority of the children answered 4-5 hours with question number four that asked about the amount of time they spend playing after school. When asked if they spend time studying at home, besides at school, for question number 5, only 43% said “ yes. ” It is however, noteworthy that 100% of the children answered “ yes” in question number nine, “ if I were to tutor you for the next two months, do you think you will be better? ” As for the result on the survey to the parents, the top four questions that had a numerical impact were questions number 1, 2, 3 and 5.

For question number one, only 50% of the parents say that they are involved in their children’s homework. The involvement of the 50% though varies from subject to subject as they have limited knowledge to some areas. Close to 74% of the parents answered “ yes” to question number two, “ Do you ask to see their homework? ” Comparing the results for both questions number one and two, the disparity between involvement (helping children out) and simply looking at the homework, is already evident. Looking at the homework does not necessarily mean seeing through the process of its completion.

One of the more interesting results is the answer to question number three, as it deals with time frames parents set to their children in accomplishing their homework. Only 20% of the population does it. The last question that had an impact is for the one that asked whether or not parents cut out

distractions (like TV or computer) in the background? Only 12% were confident in saying “ yes,” whereas a majority rated it as “ not sure. ” This result roots from the fact that they don’t entirely remove these distractions, because most of the parents still do their own chores and tasks while their children are doing their homework.

The experience has brought the conclusion that lack of attention and attentiveness to and from the kids are the biggest contributors for the knowledge deficit in the community. The objective of the project is to come up with an alternative that will help children concentrate on doing assignments to gain desire for learning anew, to help and equip parents with the styles of teaching, so that after this project, they can do it themselves. The project and teaching plan, however, are limited to tutoring Math, and not other subjects.

NursingDiagnosis: Knowledge deficit related to lack of application of age-appropriate (developmental stage) learning methodology. While the children answered in such a manner to the survey questions, an apparent lack of appropriate application of the developmental ability and capability is a contributor to making the children interested in the subject area and making the parents involved in the assignments. Parents have little knowledge on how to approach teaching children, and they are not wary about the fact that children at different stages comprehend lessons in different manners or levels.